GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1353
ANSWERED ON:27.11.2000
EFFECT ON ENVIRONMENT DUE TO DEFORESTATION
ALE NARENDRA

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the environment is being affected due to deforestation; and

(b) if so, the preventive steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU)

(a) No, Sir. As far as deforestation is concerned, from the State of Forest Report 1999 released by the Forest Survey of India in the year 2000, there is no indication of overall deforestation in the country. The comparison of the forest cover of the country between the present (1999) and the preceding assessment of 1997 shows a net increase in the forest cover by 3986 sq.km. The dense forest has increased by 10098 sq.km. mainly due to improvement in the open forests. However, cases of the deforestation on account of poor landuse policy, illicit fellings and pressure on the forests for meeting the livelihood needs of the people living in and around forest areas has contributed to some deforestation which is a natural feature in a developing nation like India where we have to meet the demands of 16% of the world population and 17% of the world`s cattle population from 1.8% of the world`s forest cover.

(b) Major steps taken by the Government to check deforestation are:

1. Government of India is biennially assessing the forest cover of the country through Forest Survey of India since 1987.As per 1999 assessment overall 3896 sq.km. of forest cover has increased as compared to 1997 assessment.

2. Guidelines have been issued to involve village communities in protection and regeneration of forests through Joint Forest Management.

3. Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 has been enacted to regulate diversion of forest land.

4. A centrally sponsored scheme Modern Forest Fire Control Methods is being implemented to protect and conserve the forests from fire.

5. Special measures for protection and conservation of tigers and elephants and their habitat are being implemented.

6. A network of Wildlife Sanctuaries and National Parks has been set up for conservation of wild flora and fauna.

7 Afforestation programme are being undertaken by the States as well as under Centrally Sponsored Scheme.